

**William John Duane to Andrew Jackson, July 22, 1833,
from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by
John Spencer Bassett.**

SECRETARY DUANE TO JACKSON

Treasury Department, July 22, 1833.

To the President of the United States.

Sir, In answer to the letter, which I have had the honor to receive from you, this afternoon, I beg leave to state, that, having understood your present object to be, merely an enquiry into the practicability of the arrangement, which you desire to make, with the state banks, in case it should be deemed proper to employ them as substitutes for the bank of the United States, and that there should be no commitment beyond that enquiry, it occurred to me that it would be prudent to insert, in the instructions to the agent, a paragraph, which would prevent any misconception, that might otherwise be produced, undesignedly on his part, in the minds of the directors of the state banks, or in those of the public: If such misconceptions should be otherwise guarded against, as they may be, I have no desire, on my own account that the paragraph should be retained.

I have already, both in writing and verbally, had the honor to state to you, that, after the fullest consideration, which I had been able to give to the subject, I do not, under existing circumstances, feel myself justified in substituting state banks for the bank of the United States, as the depository of the public money; but that I am ready to make, under your direction, the fullest enquiry as to the propriety of the change. In the discharge of the high trust confided to me, it has been my desire to act according to my best judgment, with all the lights before me; and, although I do not anticipate such a change in my views

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on the subject, even if the enquiry should establish the practicability of employing the state banks, as will lead me to remove the deposits, for any reasons now known to me, before congress shall have had an opportunity to act upon the matter, yet I am open to conviction, and will not fail to give the fullest consideration to any new facts, which may be presented, and to any information that may be obtained in the proposed enquiry: I shall also be ready to enter into a full examination of the whole subject, when you shall, as you propose, bring it before your cabinet: but, if, after receiving the information and hearing the discussion, I shall not consider it my duty, as the responsible agent of the law, to carry into effect the decision that you then make, I will, from respect for you and for myself, afford you an opportunity to select a successor, whose views may accord with your own, on the important matter in contemplation.

Beyond this conclusion, I respectfully conceive, I cannot go without improperly committing myself, a position in which I understood I was not to be put before enquiry: were I now to say, that I would persist in my present opinions, be the results of enquiry and discussion what they may, I should evince a recklessness to be rebuked; and, on the other hand, were I to pledge myself hereafter to abandon my present sentiments, without knowing whether any thing may arise to justify the change, I should betray a weakness to be pitied, perhaps despised: all that I can promise, therefore, consistently with my respect for you and for myself, is, that, when the moment for decision, after enquiry and discussion, shall arrive, I will come with you or retire.

I have the honor to be with the utmost consideration, your obt st.